

Introduction to the Natural Resources Conservation Service Supervisor Guide for Employee Orientation

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Employee Name

Introduction to NRCS

Introduction

An effective orientation is key in helping employees feel a part of the NRCS team. Orientation is the first step in fostering a sense of pride in the mission of NRCS. It helps the employee understand NRCS organization and programs as well as the benefits available to Federal Employees.

An orientation is also the opportunity for the Supervisor to begin building a working relationship with the new employee.

You as the supervisor are the key to a successful orientation. The following guide will help you achieve this success. You may need to modify the guide for employees who transfer from other Federal agencies into NRCS, since the guide was prepared as a general reference, not all area and field offices will have all the facilities and benefits described.

Useful References

Discuss the following references with the new employee.

- Supervisors Guide for Employee Orientation – a checklist of key job information contained in the Employee Orientation Handbook.
- NRCS General Manual – describes the NRCS policy and procedures.
- Equal Opportunity – Employee Grievances and Administrative Appeals, USDA Office of Personnel.
- Appendix I, Employee Responsibilities and Conduct, USDA Office of Personnel.



How to Use this Guide

This Guide contains important orientation information, including a checklist to help ensure that all the information is presented to the employee. *This Guide is to be included with the Employee Orientation Handbook.

Supervisors are expected to discuss each of the following items with the employee during their first day(s) with NRCS. The Supervisors Guide for Employee Orientation should be kept by the employee's supervisor and a copy of the signed checklist should be kept in the employee's official personnel folder.

- The supervisor should use discretion as to whether the following information can be presented in one sitting or in several.

Employee Orientation

When the new employee first reports to work, information is usually provided on Federal employment and NRCS. Additionally, she/he will need to complete a variety of forms. These forms include, but may not be limited to, the oath of office, health insurance, life insurance, tax withholding and the various retirement benefit options.

The next part of the orientation is conducted primarily by you the supervisor. During your discussions, welcome the employee and explain the employee's duties, responsibilities, and your expectations as to job performance. Review questions she/he may have.

Employment Facts

Appointment

- a. ☐ Job title, grade series, salary step increases and promotional potential
- b. ☐ Nature of appointment, part-time or full-time (and duration, if appropriate)
- c. ☐ Probationary period

Work Schedules

- a. ☐ Work week
- b. ☐ Core hours
- c. ☐ Lunch periods
- d. ☐ Various work schedules available

Pay

- a. ☐ Pay periods and pay days
- b. ☐ Delivery of pay checks and direct deposit
- c. ☐ Length of time before receiving first paycheck
- d. ☐ Pay deductions (mandatory and optional)
- e. ☐ Savings bonds
- f. ☐ Combined Federal Campaign
- g. ☐ Allotments
- h. ☐ Credit Union

Leave

- a. ☐ Annual –(General Manual 360, Subpart B, 415.10)
- b. ☐ Sick
- c. ☐ Holidays
- d. ☐ Approval policy
- e. ☐ Other

Insurance

- a. ☐ Health Insurance
- b. ☐ Life Insurance
- c. ☐ Beneficiary forms

Retirement

- a. ☐ Type of coverage
- b. ☐ Information booklets
- c. ☐ Beneficiary forms
- d. ☐ Thrift Savings Plan

Standards of Conduct

- a. ☐ Integrity
- b. ☐ Political activity
- c. ☐ Labor/Management relations
- d. ☐ Employee Counseling Program – it's purpose, who may go, and procedures. (See section K).

Job Overview

- 1. ☐ Introduce employee to co-workers
- 2. ☐ Arrange for employee to meet other appropriate managers of other USDA agencies.

Tour of Work Location

- 1. ☐ Conduct a tour of the immediate work area, location of telephones, message center, mail boxes, typing support, etc.
- 2. ☐ Arrange an overall tour of the facilities to include credit union, health unit, eating locations, rest rooms, personnel office and bulletin boards.

Office Procedures

1. ☐ Discuss how work is assigned and reviewed.
2. ☐ Explain the routing and clearance procedures for correspondence.
3. ☐ Point out frequently used internal forms, where they are kept, and how they are to be used.
4. ☐ Explain NRCS procedures for national and state bulletins and other directives.
5. ☐ Explain the safety and health practices applicable to the office/work environment.

Organization Information

1. ☐ Explain how the work unit, co-workers, and the new employee contribute and relate to the mission and organization of NRCS and USDA. An organizational chart and brief mission statement may be helpful to the new employee at this time; these are available in the Employee Orientation Handbook.
2. ☐ Talk about the customer service aspect of the employee's position and the organization.
3. ☐ Discuss NRCS commitment to quality products and services.
4. ☐ Give examples of NRCS programs and conservation legislation.

Working Relationships

1. ☐ Working in an agricultural service center or being co-located with other agricultural offices.
2. ☐ Working with soil and water conservation district employees.
3. ☐ Working with members of the public.

Expectations

1. ☐ Provide the employee with a copy of her or his position description and review the duties and responsibilities.
2. ☐ Explain how the employee's performance contributes to the performance accomplishments of the work unit.
3. ☐ Discuss the work unit's plan of operations and any other work objectives.

4. ☐ Discuss any probationary period which the employee may be serving and the assessment of the performance during this final step of the selection process.
5. ☐ Discuss how a probationary certification form will be completed near the end of the probationary period.

Performance Appraisal Worksheet, Reviews, and Performance Appraisals

1. ☐ Discuss the need to establish performance elements and standards within 30 days of the reporting date.
 - a. ☐ Identify the critical and non-critical elements of the position.
 - b. ☐ Describe how performance is measured and documented.
2. ☐ Within 30 days, develop and sign (employee and supervisor) the established performance elements and standards.
3. ☐ Identify and routinely scheduled work reviews.
4. ☐ Discuss the need for periodic performance reviews (quarterly is optional, and half-year is mandatory).
5. ☐ Discuss the end-of-year performance appraisal process.

Guide to Employee Recognition

1. ☐ Explain the Employee Suggestion Program and how to use it.
2. ☐ Explain the various types of employee recognition.
 - a. ☐ Non-monetary awards, such as letters and certificates of appreciation or recognition.
 - b. ☐ Monetary awards, such as cash awards, quality step increases.

Merit Promotion and Placement

1. ☐ Explain how positions can be filled through non-competitive procedures (such as lateral reassignments) and competitive procedures (such as selection from a vacancy announcement).

2. ☐ Discuss the agency vacancy announcement system and how jobs are advertised.
3. ☐ Discuss how an employee would apply to a vacancy announcement (submitting the required documents and to whom).
4. ☐ Discuss the various types of career ladders.

Employee Development

1. ☐ Explain how the employee will be trained for the current position.
2. ☐ Explain the preparation and use of the employee development plan.
3. ☐ Discuss other career development opportunities (technical training; NRCS management training curriculum, and self development activities).

Rules of Conduct

1. ☐ Stress the NRCS policy of avoiding conflict of interest and acceptance of gratuities.
2. ☐ Explain procedures for reporting bribes.
3. ☐ Grievance procedures.
4. ☐ Privacy Act and Freedom of Information.
5. ☐ Use of Government Vehicles.

Civil Rights

1. ☐ Discuss emergency procedures for fire, or other evacuations.
2. ☐ Explain weather related emergency procedures. Identify television or radio stations that announce office closings.
3. ☐ Provide the employee with emergency telephone numbers.
4. ☐ Request the employee's emergency notification information.
5. ☐ Explain procedure for reporting an on-the-job injury or accident, and discuss work compensation policies.
6. ☐ Point out the location of first aid facilities or health unit.

Security

1. ☐ Discuss the use of the NRCS identification card/badge.
2. ☐ Point out the importance of reporting security violations and unauthorized or suspicious persons in restricted areas.
3. ☐ Remind employees of the need to safeguard personal property (wallets, calculators, etc.) as well as government property and documents in their possession.

Employee Benefits

1. ☐ Inform employee of the benefits your facility may provide such as:
 - a. ☐ The credit union
 - b. ☐ Health unit facilities
 - c. ☐ Employee Assistance Program

Supervisor Guide for Employee Orientation

Signature Page

Supervisor

Date

Title

Employee

Date

Title

Location

Date

Include this page in the employee's official personnel folder on the left side.